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### **V School Honored with Power of Service Award for Refugee Coding Project**

SALT LAKE CITY— For several months, volunteers such as Victor Villa and Mo Reeder have taught refugee youth computer science and coding skills that will link them to future educational and professional opportunities. Already, graduates of the program have been placed in internships and paired with professional mentors to continue their technical studies.

In honor of the V School and the Refugee Coding Project, the Lieutenant Governor's office Chief Deputy Mark Thomas, UServeUtah Commission Chair Kris Hamlet and Director LaDawn Stoddard presented the Power of Service award to V School on July 21, 2016, at the Utah State Capitol. Victor Villa received the award on behalf of V School. Utah is home to over 60,000 refugees and the program helps these communities integrate and provides opportunities for education and quality employment.

Villa and Mo Reeder are the volunteer leads for V School and Utah Open Source, respectively, two of the main implementing partners of the Refugee Coding Project. Villa and Reeder have been regular volunteers throughout the life of the program and led a series of lessons and workshops on computer coding to the youth in this program.

Through Utah Open Source, Villa led the movement to collect hardware and refurbish computers, so that each student was able to go home with their own computer to practice and further develop their coding skills. Reeder mobilized his team at V School and Cap Designs to support a marketing strategy and social media campaign for the project, which enabled the program to attract an amazing group of talented and engaged volunteers and partners such as Adobe, Cotopaxi, Goldman Sachs, Sustainable Startups, Westminster College, and the Department of Workforce Services.

Following graduation from the program, a number of students have been paired with professional mentors and been placed in internships with local companies. Villa and Reeder are hosting youth and providing real pathways to jobs. They have remained active in the initiative and are helping to share it's future.

One volunteer is chosen four times per year to receive the Power of Service Award. This award is given to a volunteer that shows significant commitment to their community and demonstrates the power of volunteer service through their activities. Visit [UServe.Utah.gov](http://UServe.Utah.gov) to learn how to nominate for a Lt. Governor's Volunteer Recognition Certificate.

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Find more about us online at [userve.utah.gov](http://userve.utah.gov)

UServeUtah, the Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism, is the state's central coordinating body for service and volunteerism. The Commission is responsible for developing, implementing, and sustaining a vision and culture of civic engagement and national and community service within the state. UServeUtah does this through promoting volunteerism; administering National Service programs; connecting people with opportunities to serve; building organizational capacity for effective volunteer engagement and; participating in strategic initiatives that mobilize volunteers to meet local needs.

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